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# CHRISTMAS JOYS ARE ALMOST HERE

Wonderful Sights Santa Claus Is a Real and Live Spirit.

CHRISTMAS is coming. Even in Honolulu, where the climatic signs of the approach of the festive season, as manifested on the Mainland are entirely wanting, there is left no possible room for doubt that the year's period of great good will is high at hand.

The information is written large in the store windows of the city, which are just now crowded with a dazzling assortment of articles, useful, ornamental and unclassifiable, one and all bearing the inscription printed in ink of divers colors, "Christmas Presents."

What an uncanny medley of gifts greets the eye as one wanders along the business thoroughfares of the town! Christmas is essentially the children's celebration, and it is to the wishes of the younger generation that the tradesmen make a special point of catering.

It has been said and well said that there is not anything new under the sun, and in the matter of Christmas presents there certainly is not. Some of the goods exhibited this year have been trotted out and displayed on the same shelf in the same store for the past five Christmases.

Two mechanical toys in particular are noticeable in this respect, the old man who aimed with a fly-swatter, patiently awaits the coming of mus musculus, and the twin cats with ribbons round their necks which jig joyously to each other's fiddling on a glass-encased stage.

The small boys of the town wot well the locality of these diverting objects, and daily throng the window, where, when wound up, the menagerie is wont to perform. As a drawing card they are immense, and their value as such probably accounts for their annual reappearance on the Christmas field of action. Or, maybe, their owner out of regard for their services in the matter of crowd-gathering, feels affectionately toward them, and would not part with them for gold, silver or precious stones, having decided to pension them as was pensioned the charger of the great Napoleon.

He is an interesting personage, is the old man with the fly disturber, and his attire as well as his attitude is striking. His dressing gown is yellow in color and plentifully speckled with claret-hued spots; the sleeves of the robe are red. The white nightcap with its tassel of blue, is a chaste conception not likely to be forgotten when once seen. Five years ago this same old man was just as usefully employed in waiting for this identical mouse as he is today. He has never caught the rodent, however, and its elusive qualities have aged the old man considerably; another season's monkeying with that mouse will inevitably land the aged lump of senility behind the bars of a lunatic asylum. A man who puts in five Christmases endeavoring to administer the quietus to an unoffending mouse, is a doddering idiot, anyway.

The mouse, it will be noticed, appears to have no kick coming, but seems to rather enjoy the fun, and gives his tormentor the same old ha-ha as he did in the year anno domini 1895.

The musical, beribboned cats, next door but one, are second only in juvenile popularity to the aforementioned bauble. Time has dealt kindly with them, but out of compliment to their up-to-date admirers their legs should be initiated into the intricacies of ragtime; the pas de deux of the 1895 vintage is just a little obsolete in the present year of grace. They are good-mannered cats, however, and play their parts to the best of their ability, so far be it from the writer to discriminate.

And then there are the mutinously colored plush picture frames and photograph albums, the latter bearing on their covers a bell with "liberty" written above it, a horseshoe surmounted with the words "good luck," and a looking-glass. The whyness of the bell and the wherefore of the horseshoe are questions the answers of which grow only on the Christmas tree.

There are a thousand and one Christmas "novelties," all worthy of extended double-headed press notices; rainbow embroidered silk handkerchiefs, kaleidoscopic neckties, pearly sleeve links bejeweled with grotesque initials, curious ivories, impossible lithographs, eastern oddities, fantastic draperies, trumpets that blow, dolls that squeak, woolly ba-sheep, horses with tails of real hair, gaily painted balls for the babies, culpable smoking jackets, expurgated editions of Mother Goose, tin rats that wind up and are all made to run, and green Christmas trees bravely decorated with sparkling tinsel.

Christmas is of a verity within hailing distance, and the boys and girls, together with the spectacle loving Portuguese and the simple, big-hearted Hawaiians are glad of it, and stroll from store window to store window, gazing their fill at the wonderful sights that yearly appear and vanish with the Christmas season.

H. M. AYRES.

Justin McCarthy and some friends were talking once about a member of the House of Commons. A lady who was one of the company said it was a pity for the sake of his personal appearance that he had such very large ears. "Yes," said T. P. O'Connor, the brilliant parliamentary and platform orator, "and the worst of it is that while they are too large for ears, they are too small for wings."

Who—Are those Russian names really as twisted as they look?

He—They are, indeed. Some of them are so hopelessly involved that even a railroad brakeman could not mispronounce them.—Indianapolis Journal.

SANTA CLAUS is a spirit. He is a personification of the loving spirit which gives because it loves.

Who can wander among the crowded shops at the Christmas season, watch the many happy purchasers, see the matter-of-fact business man for once throw care away and go home with his arms full of bundles and his heart full of love for others and doubt that Santa Claus is a real, live influence in our community for good?

To the little child whose faith is unshaken, Santa Claus has a very important spiritual value. To understand this fully something of the workings of the childish mind must be known.

All spiritual truths and qualities must come to the child through material objects or symbols. Even physical qualities are not separated from the object for some time.

Love is at first inseparable from mother. A little girl four years old went home one day from kindergarten and told her mother in wonder and surprise that the teacher had picked up a little boy who had fallen and hurt himself and had fondled him just like a mother.

Children see the mother hen, the mother bird, the mother dog, and finally they abstract the spiritual quality—love—which makes them all alike. This is a stepping-stone to a knowledge of the love of the Father, who says "Even the hairs of your head are numbered."

How many of us grown-up people fully appreciate God's gifts to us? How many of us know the meaning in all its fullness, of God's great gift to us in the shape of His beloved Son? Is not the highest ideal of Christian character today one who gives—his goods, himself, even his life if need be—because he loves?

Now, what is Santa Claus but a personification of this spirit, a son of Faith and Love, so Eugene Field tells us in his beautiful story, "The Symbol and the Saint?"

Give Santa Claus to the little child the first few Christmases as a man. Make him as real as you can—flesh and blood—but always emphasize the one important fact that he gives because he loves. He is happy because he gives, and so his body expresses joyfulness, kindness and good will. He is very old because he has given to so many generations, hence his white beard and hair.

The next year call him a fairy or a spirit, who can make himself large or small; who can creep through the tiniest cracks, so that if you shut up all the doors and windows and stop up the chimney, still he will find his way in. By this time, too, the child may begin to wonder how he can find all the children in one night. His being a fairy or spirit will explain all such difficulties, for he is no longer bound by physical laws.

The child can play Santa Claus and plan all sorts of surprises for the different members of the family which will give him quite as much pleasure as his looking forward to Santa Claus' visit.

Probably the next year he will still believe that Santa Claus fills his stockings, although he takes a very active part in the Christmas preparations himself. Naturally and easily he learns through this symbol to know the truth, and knowing the truth needs the symbol no longer. His father is Santa Claus, his mother is Santa Claus, he is Santa Claus; yes, everyone who gives is Santa Claus.

The great danger in the use of this myth comes from the fact that so many grown-up people consider it a lie and a delusion for the infant mind. "Let him believe in the lie as long as he can," they say, and they take every precaution to blind him to the truth by planning a deep-laid plot of deceit. Then, when the child is long past the age when he needs the symbol, they suddenly say, "It is all a lie. We have duped you into believing it," and then wonder why he rebels.

What we need is more imagination, more belief in the real existence of the loving and giving spirit, more belief in and love for God Himself, and then we can tell the story of Santa Claus with reverent lips along with the story of the birth of the Christ Child and be sure it will foreshadow a belief in and love for the "All-Giver, the All-Lover, the One who gives because He loves." KINDERGARTEN.

## BRIDGES AT NIAGARA.

Danger of the Work on New Approaches at Goat Island.

It is doubtful if a more dangerous and interesting piece of bridge construction has ever been done at Niagara Falls than the building of the new concrete arches between the Mainland and Goat Island. The point where the operations are being conducted is right over the upper rapids, where the waters dash furiously, as though hungry to sweep a human being down through the rapids and over the American fall. This interesting work is only 500 feet back of the brink over which so many have been hurled to death, and the workmen have to use the greatest care that they may not fall into the forty-mile current of the fascinating waters.

These new bridges are being built on the State reservation lands, and the work is under the supervision of the State engineer department. All summer long it has been necessary to use a temporary wooden bridge only six feet wide in passing to and from the shore of Goat Island. The old bridges have been closed to pedestrians, as well as carriage travel, and it is many months since an ambitious Niagara hackman drove a fare about the island. It is doubtful if the bridge will be opened this fall. The commissioner of the reservation will take steps to hurry the work as much as possible.

When the new bridges are completed they will add materially to the beauty of the view looking from the

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Mainland to Goat Island. They will be of concrete, but faced with stone in all parts, and so will have every appearance of beautiful rustic stone structures. The bridge from the Mainland to Green Island will have a length of 371 feet. It will have three spans. Surmounting the structure there will be an iron railing of appropriate design.

Between Green Island and Goat Island the second bridge will be located, and it is now well under way. This bridge will be of the same style of construction, but will not be quite so long. From shore to shore it will be 198 feet. It will also have three spans or arches.

The water over which the bridge is being built varies in depth from six to twelve feet, and the current has a wonderful force in its hurry to plunge over the falls and bury itself in the waters of the gorge. Right in this current the contractors are forced to sink cofferdams in order that the bottom of the river may be reached for the construction of the piers. It has been found quite a task to shut out the waters of the rapids, for the pressure all about it is awful. However, it has been done, and the concrete for the piers is placed in a practically dry cofferdam, the water that does enter, being pumped out by electric motors. The concrete is mixed in mixers operated electrically. Men working in the water have life lines about them, and all about the dangerous points life lines are stretched and life buoys floating to catch any work-

men who might be unfortunate enough to slip into the water.

The consulting engineer is R. S. Buck, who has won fame in connection with all the Niagara bridges, and D. D. Waldo, of Medina, is his assistant. While carriages have not been allowed to cross to Goat Island, the reservation van service has been maintained in order that aged people might have some means of traveling about the island. All the vans and horses used in this island service were taken over before the bridges were commenced.—Rochester Democrat.

Parson Johnson (after the ceremony)—"May yo' bofe be very happy! Yo', Jim, have got a good wife, and yo', ma'am, have got a fine, upright, exemplary Christian husband—mah fee am two dollahs." Jim Jackson—"P-lease trust me till next week Friday, pahson?" Parson Johnson—"Trust yo'! Why, yo' coarse, low-down, light-fingered chicken thief, I would not trust yo' wif an old cat I wanted to get rid of."—Judge.

Warwick—"England keeps getting friendlier than ever to us since she got into trouble with the Transvaal." Wickwire—"Yes; she now claims that she sympathized with us in our war with the Hessians last century."—Judge.

Spruance, Stanley & Co., San Francisco, are the proprietors of the celebrated "Kentucky Favorite" whisky.